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International News Gets Intense Readership

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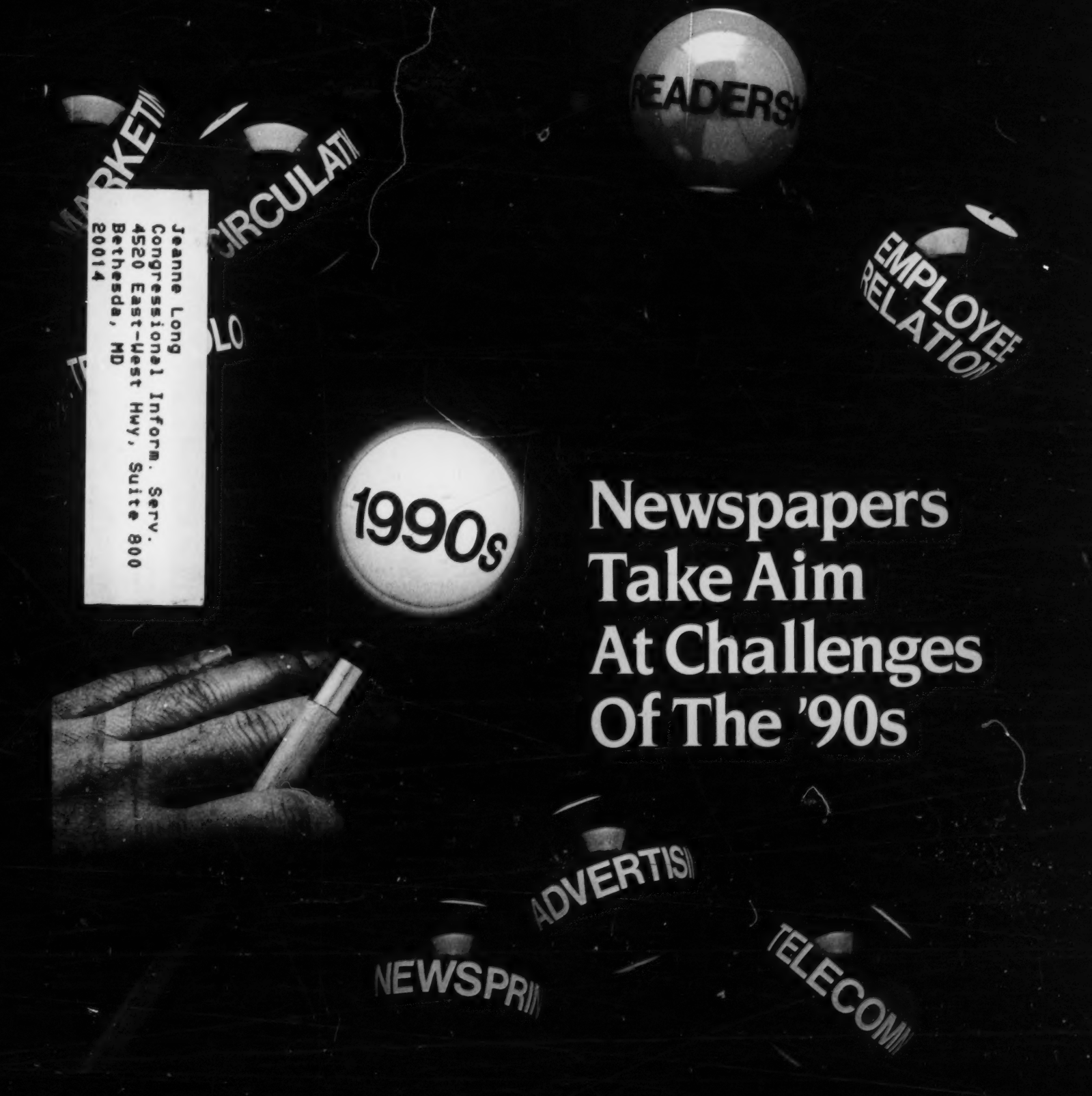
The Journal of the American Newspaper Publishers Association



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Newspapers Take Aim At Challenges Of The '90s

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Special Report

What's ahead for the newspaper industry in the 1990s—and the 21st century? Is it the Migraine Millennium or the Hinge of History? Our 18 experts say the coming decade holds even more competition and challenges, but there is also plentiful opportunity. A good recipe for invigorating times. On with the predictions, experts:

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CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Newspapers' priorities shape 1990 ANPA activity

Many experts share their ideas for the 1990s in this issue. Your ANPA leadership has given much thought to the future and has come to grips with what's to be done in this new year. We have refocused the ANPA agenda to match what we believe is on your agenda.

With your help we have identified top industry priorities and targeted your Association's resources and effort to provide useful help for you in exactly those areas. Let me hit a few of the highlights:

William H. Cowles 3rd

Cost containment is on your mind; ANPA's too. Your staff has developed and your Directors have approved a 1990 program that limits ANPA's spending growth to 3.2 percent. No dues-formula increase will be sought this year. We intend in coming years to relate Association spending rates and trends very closely to those that affect us in our newspaper operations. Yet, even with that strict guideline, we will attack vigorously things you want.

Circulation and readership activities will be further expanded, using nearly $700,000. Our assessment teams are searching out and will report to you the very best new ideas and techniques for distribution systems, editorial enhancements, personnel development, and—most importantly—customer service for our readers and advertisers.

Telecommunications opportunities and public policies will receive top-drawer attention, at about $1.5 million. We continue to battle in the courts and Congress to preserve fair competition and marketplace diversity. We will search out and share with you new business possibilities based on electronic technologies that can buttress our primary, newspaper franchises.

Postal developments in a year of a new rate case will be high on the agenda, at some $500,000 plus heavy staff support. As always, we will weigh in for fair rates for all mail classes, because we use all mail classes. And we will guard against special deals for special mailers, which disadvantage others or place undue burdens on the costs of other classes of mail.

Overall, we will carefully apply some $17.5 million from ANPA, and another $1 million from our Foundation, to the above priorities and to such other key things as: taxes, recycling, independent contractors, health and environmental matters, technical research and training, management and marketing training, compensation and employment data, workplace diversity, education, literacy, safeguarding of the First Amendment, editorial excellence, world press freedom and communications access, **presstime**, ANPA/TEC, and a comprehensive April Convention in Los Angeles.

Our goal is valuable service delivered for dues and fees received. As always, your support is deeply appreciated by your colleagues, and your suggestions to me will be acted upon promptly. Best wishes for this New Year!

Bill Cowles

William H. Cowles 3rd
ANPA Chairman

P.S. Last month I missed including ANCAM when I mentioned several industry groups who are leaders in our circulation and readership work. ANCAM has been extraordinarily effective!

Meet the New Press Corps

Washington correspondents now are a lot more like journalists elsewhere

BY STEPHEN HESS

Reporters in Washington, D.C., aren't what they used to be.

They used to be different from their counterparts elsewhere in the United States. Now they're practically a mirror image.

This conclusion is drawn from a 1988 survey of 190 reporters who cover the Nation's Capital for a regional audience back home. Results may be compared with a similar survey taken in 1978. Both surveys were conducted by The Brookings Institution.

We had found in 1978 that Washington reporters were an elite.

Washington journalists always have been suspected of an East Coast slant. Our 1978 data showed that although a quarter of the U.S. population lived in the Northeast, more than a third of the Washington reporters came from those states. Correspondingly, the Western states were underrepresented.

Ten years later these gaps had nearly closed, and the percentages of reporters from the Northeast and West were almost the same as the percentages of all Americans who come from these regions. Indeed, among the new arrivals—those in our survey who had been in Washington for a year or less—the percentage from the West (24.6) actually exceeded the region's share of the population.

Similarly, the educational gap has narrowed. In terms of college degrees, Washington reporters have almost reached the saturation point, 98 percent, but the rest of the U.S. journalism population is catching up. Among daily newspaper journalists, college graduates went from 63 percent in 1971 to 74 percent in 1982 to 85 percent in 1988.

In 1978 there was also a gap between what journalists inside and outside of the Washington beltway chose to study. The academic major of choice throughout the United States was journalism. Not in Washington. Sixty-two percent of all Washington reporters and 54 percent of the capital's regional reporters had studied humanities/liberal arts.

But the 1988 survey found that 49 percent of the regional reporters had been journalism majors, a figure that combines 45 percent of those who work for newspapers with 60 percent of the TV reporters.

Stephen Hess

Moreover, six of every 10 current regional reporters who attended graduate school studied journalism. And of the undergraduate journalism majors who went on to graduate school, three-fourths continued their journalism specialty.

Changes in the educational backgrounds of Washington reporters can be seen most graphically by comparing the youngest and oldest cohorts—those in their 20s and those over 50.

	Years of Age	
Undergraduate fields of study	**20-29**	**50 and over**
Humanities/liberal arts	41.9%	58.3%
Journalism	48.4%	33.3%
Science/technology	9.7%	8.3%

These figures would lean even more toward journalism education had not so many of the younger Washington reporters attended highly selective colleges that do not have journalism departments. Fewer than 9 percent of those who went to the most prestigious universities were journalism majors, whereas over half of those from the least selective schools majored in journalism.

Yet there is a semi-surprise in the increased number of journalism majors in the Washington press corps. In our earlier examination, news organizations broadly hinted that they might go outside the ranks of J-school graduates, or even of journalism itself, to staff their Washington bureaus. The need was for specialists: reporters whose training was not in interviewing sources and writing stories (those skills could be learned on the job, some editors said), but trained to analyze Supreme Court decisions or health-care policy or the national debt.

The problem with this design is that it is expensive—not necessarily because these reporters cost more (although they may), but because they are not fungible. That is, they are not transferable to other assignments when the demand of events calls for reallocating resources.

Apparently somewhere between our two studies the desire for specialization slowed down, perhaps even stopped. The increase in reporters who had majored in journalism may be one result of this development. The journalism major, so out of fashion in 1978, would become today's ultimate generalist.

So in the course of a decade, Washington reporters went from a background weighted in terms of humanities/liberal arts to one of vocationally oriented training, paralleling the rest of the nation's journalists.

In part, this may be a reflection of more professional education for Americans in all fields. It may also reflect the special drive of women and minorities to get into journalism. And, of course, as journalism becomes more technologically complex, there is more to be taught.

A humanities/liberal-arts background was in keeping with journalism as an occupation that was easy to get into and out of. The earlier study traced the drift of Washington reporters leaving journalism, an informal personnel system that wasted talented workers. Some interviewees contended that this was simply a characteristic of a low-paying business.

Reporters are better paid now. And the trend toward journalism education also raises the question of whether journalists are likely to remain longer in a profession than they did in a craft. □

Hess is senior fellow at The Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. This article is adapted from testimony he gave Sept. 20 before the Bipartisan Task Force on Ethics of the U.S. House of Representatives. Brookings plans to publish this material next year as part of a study to be called "The Main Street Capital: Local and Regional News from Washington."

MINORITY AFFAIRS

Changing Times

Three-quarters of U.S. population growth in the decade will be minorities, so newspapers need to respond in appropriate fashion

BY WALTERENE J. SWANSTON

The promotion of minority employees into key management jobs will be one of the more crucial and challenging tasks facing the newspaper industry in the new decade. How well that job is done will determine whether newspapers retain the minority employees they have methodically recruited and hired.

During the years following the urban disturbances of the 1960s, many newspapers made an effort to employ more minority people because of a sense of justice: It was the right thing to do, the moral thing to do.

Walterene J. Swanston

But increasingly in the coming years, as newspapers fight for economic survival, minorities will be crucial to the very future of the newspaper business.

The number of newspaper readers in traditionally heavy readership groups is decreasing. Circulation is flat. Advertising performance is mixed. To prosper, newspapers must focus on the most dynamic segments of their local communities. And in the new decade, the most dramatic changes will occur within minority communities.

Studies show that between now and 2000, racial minorities will account for 73 percent of the population growth in the United States. Newspapers that succeed in attracting minority readers, advertisers and employees will be the ones that benefit most from this growth surge. Minority newspaper readership can be expected to increase as educational and income levels increase.

Minorities are also a growing portion of the labor force. According to research reports, 56 percent of all people entering the workforce this decade will be from minority groups.

Swanston is ANPA Foundation manager/minority affairs.

Projection of U.S. minority populations: 1980 to 2010 (in millions)

	1980		1990		2000		2010	
Total population	226.5		252.3		274.4		294.1	
Non-minority	180.6	80%	191.6	76%	197.6	72%	200.2	68%
Minority, total	45.9	20%	60.7	24%	76.8	28%	93.9	32%
Black	26.1	12%	30.5	12%	34.8	13%	39.2	13%
Hispanic	14.6	6%	21.9	9%	30.3	11%	39.5	13%
Asian	3.5	2%	6.5	3%	9.9	4%	13.4	5%
Native Amer./Other	1.7	1%	1.8	1%	1.8	1%	1.8	1%

Source: "Cornerstone for Growth," by Task Force on Minorities in the Newspaper Business

Hiring and retaining minorities at all levels—from newsrooms to executive offices and from pressrooms to circulation departments—are effective ways to improve the image of the newspaper in the community and to establish news and commercial connections.

In addition, minority employees provide a newspaper with a broader range of viewpoints that are more representative of the community at large. This makes for better coverage.

Even newspapers in communities that currently have few minority residents may find that during the 1990s the makeup of their circulation areas is going to change. And for the newspapers in communities that already have sizable minority populations, the changes will be still greater.

Newspaper executives must learn to show respect for cultural differences and to value workforce diversity.

It will take special skills to manage properly the more diverse workforce of the '90s. Newspaper executives must learn to show respect for cultural differences and let minority employees contribute to the organization's betterment in their own special ways. They must also learn to value workforce diversity.

Minority employees are looking for a work environment in which they can make a contribution and have an equal chance to succeed. Unless they are allowed to do so, the alienation and disillusionment many feel will drive them from the newspaper business.

Only 7 percent of newspaper managers are minorities, according to the most recent survey of minorities in the newspaper business, conducted by Belden Associates for ANPA in 1988.

The challenge of the new decade is to find ways to make minorities more comfortable in our industry as well as to provide opportunities for them to succeed and advance.